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Crisis on the Rails

In our special series by trade union leaders, George James (National Union of Railwaymen) gives the background

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The Liberal Ghost

Can it stage a comeback, or has it gone west?
R. Page Arnot answers it

Other Articles include

MAY DAY NOTES OF THE MONTH
by R.P.D

WHAT MONARCHY COSTS
cast up by 'Commoner'

TRUE HISTORY OF COLD WAR
told by
D. N. Pritt, Q.C.

CHANGING CHINA
Reviewed by
Ivor Montagu

ONE SHILLING AND SIXPENCE

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'WE THE LIVING'

Let dead hearts tarry and trade and marry
And trembling nurse their dreams of mirth
While we, the living, our lives are giving
To bring the bright new world to birth.

IN THE WARMTH and gleam of May Day, whatever the words on the banner above us and in whatever language written, the message is the same. There is no other day on which the thoughts of so many millions of different lands, races and creeds are united. And not only of people far apart across the world. May Day is also a meeting point for people from past, present and future. When this verse was written by a great British Socialist three quarters of a century ago he was speaking to the Northumbrian miner of his day, the Midland railwayman, the London docker and match girl and their families. But he was thinking also of the martyrs of the Paris Commune, massacred in the month of May some dozen years before. For before May Day became Labour's day all over the world, British Socialists each spring commemorated those Communards who had 'stormed heaven' as the world's first ever working class government. And beside them in London, Scotland, Yorkshire stood Communard exiles, living reminders of the lesson of revolutionary determination and international solidarity, who had the vision to struggle when conditions seemed desperate, before the vast victories which we have seen.

Yet, when he wrote these lines William Morris was thinking of us, too, and those who are to come after us. He included us and the Communard martyrs amongst 'the living'. To him 'dead hearts' were not those which ceased to beat when they were shot down against the wall at the Père Lachaise cemetery in Paris in May, 1871. The timid souls and unbelievers of his day (and of 1958), accepting the scraps of life and living which is all the capitalist system allows them; content to ignore all but their 'own life'—this is not living, as a sixteen-year-old correspondent wrote in L.M. a few weeks back. To hug such chains and to be afraid to lose them, instead of struggling to end the degradations of class society and replace it with the infinite possibilities of the peaceful brotherhood of man, this, indeed, is to be 'dead'. Today the Communards, William Morris and all such valiant fighters past and present are with us, and 'we, the living' join hands with the new men and women to be. The workers are the last class to survive in history—in a very different sense from that of the H-bomb maniacs. So it always seems most fitting that the festival of this class should be in May when the *'valiant Earth'*, as William Morris says, *'hangs aloft from tree to tree The banners of the Spring to be.'*

It is our job to see what is new, to point the way to what is coming into existence, not to get lost in the wood of the transitory, of what is fleeting. So it is interesting to note that our series on Democracy and the Trade Unions and the new turn in resistance to Government attacks is getting considerable attention (and not only in trade union circles) as we can note from the orders for back numbers. The list is certainly impressive. It opened, readers will recall, in December with *War on the*

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NOTES OF THE MONTH

1. *May Day Signs of Battle*

MAY DAY, 1958, gives every indication of an approaching climax alike in the international situation and in Britain. Whether or not the transport battle opens on May 5, or is temporarily postponed, there is no question that the Government and the employers have been busily engaged in setting the scene for a showdown with the trade unions. The spirit of the eight and a half million trade unionists, representing the nation, is strong and united to resist. The climate has already begun to recall that of 1925-26.

At the same time in the international situation the decision on a Summit Conference is finally due to be taken. All the labyrinthine maze of interminable exchanges, procedural obstructions. prevarications, pretexts and evasions. devised with what once used to be regarded as 'oriental' subtlety by the modern Western mind in order to hold off the dreaded day of peaceful meeting, without incurring the public odium of open refusal, cannot in the end be indefinitely prolonged to infinity. The latest Soviet acceptance of the proposed ambassadorial meeting to prepare the Foreign Ministers' meeting to prepare the Summit Conference has snipped the last barbed wire entanglement

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devised by the West—unless of course it should now be discovered that a preliminary meeting of lower grade diplomatic officials should first be necessary in order to ensure the success of the ambassadorial meeting to ensure the success of the Foreign Ministers' conference to ensure the success of the House that Jack Built. According to this line of reasoning there might still be room for manœuvre up to the final stage of the triumphant discovery that a meeting of office boys is the indispensable preliminary to ensure the success of a Summit Conference. Public opinion, however, is growing impatient, and it is evident that the hour of decision on the question of a Summit Conference is due.

Anticipating the outcome of any Summit Conference, if held, the Soviet Union's unilateral suspension of nuclear tests has brought the issue of positive decisions in this crucial sphere to the forefront in a way that can no longer be evaded. The preliminary Western replies have reached a degree of baffled and woolly incoherence surpassing the palmiest days of the late Ramsay MacDonald. But once again the pressure of public opinion is rising. Ruislip, Aldermaston and Trafalgar Square have been signposts of the mounting campaign which can compel decisions.

Into Battle

All this is developing in the midst of a worsening economic situation of the capitalist world, which is not only shattering the short-lived illusions of a new, progressive, harmonious 'contemporary capitalism', but is now also, as the deterioration extends, exploding also the initial facile predictions of a mere temporary minor setback. Eisenhower's promise of 'recovery by March' has vanished into limbo. This situation is compelling the extended recognition of the need for some real socialist 'new thinking' to replace the sophistries of the spurious 'New Thinkers' of revisionism. Confronted with this visible bankruptcy and rising unpopularity of the Macmillan Government, some sections of Toryism are speculating on the possibility of a snap election at a chosen moment this year on the basis of some temporary slogan to hide their disarray. Either by the use of the popular slogan of a Summit Conference (as in 1955), or by invoking the menace of the disastrous economic and industrial situation (as in 1931), these gamblers hope to snatch a new majority out of the jaws of the defeat that is otherwise manifestly facing them. Hence all the signals of this May Day sound the call for the unity and strength and fighting readiness of the labour movement to enter on the approaching

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battles, industrial and political, which will have such decisive significance for the future of Britain and of peace.

2. *Wages and the Economic Situation*

In the forefront of the situation in Britain stands the deepening industrial conflict. Lord Curmudgeon Cohen has been followed by Sir John Freeze-Wage Forster. The offensive of the Government and the employers in the industrial field has now advanced from theory to practice. After the preliminary artillery barrage of propaganda, embodied in the Cohen Report in February, the offensive has been launched with the Industrial Court's award in March refusing the claims of the busmen, and the Railway National Staff Tribunal's award in April, rejecting any increase for railwaymen, despite the admitted increase in the cost of living and the justice of their claims. It is significant that the offensive has thus been launched in the crucial sector of the transport industry, alongside the audible rumbling of the deadlock in the negotiations in the mining industry. Thus the general offensive of capitalism against the standards of the workers has been launched first in the nationalised industries. The first direct clash, with the prospect of possible conflict in May, has been centred in that section of the nationalised industries, the transport industry, where standards are most depressed and have admittedly fallen behind the increase in the cost of living and the advance in national productivity.

Wages, Prices and Productivity

The formulation of the two awards which have opened the battle is no less significant. The Government's propaganda, as in the Cohen Report, has sought to claim that wage increases have been the cause of inflation and of the economic difficulties of the country. They have sought to claim that wage increases have outstripped the advance of production, and that therefore no further increases in wages can be granted until a further increase in production has been achieved. But the sector where the offensive has been launched provides the most glaring demonstration of the opposite. The London bus driver's wage before the war was £4 10s. a week. Today the basic wage is £9 13s. 6d. That is an increase of 115 per cent. In the same period the official measure of the cost of living has increased by 170 per cent. To receive the equivalent of his

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pre-war wage a London bus driver should be getting over £13 a week. The modest original demand of the busmen for a 25s. increase, and the still more modest revised demand for 10s. 6d., is far below making good the actual fall in real wages. But the Industrial Court expressly ruled out any increase in wages to meet the rise in the cost of living. Thus a key section of the workers is now told that they must be satisfied with wages below the pre-war level. This is further declared to be a pointer for all future wage demands of all sections.

Offensive to Cut Wages

But the full character of the offensive goes further. For at the very same time the Treasury *Bulletin for Industry* for March has boasted that industrial production in Britain has risen by one-third during the past ten years. Have the standards of the workers increased correspondingly by one-third? On the contrary. The unions have been engaged in a ceaseless battle merely to keep up with the continuous advances in the cost of living. The fruits of the increase in production have been spent elsewhere. Thus, while national production has increased above the pre-war level, the bus award has ruled that the busmen, engaged in far more arduous conditions of work through increased traffic than before the war, must receive less than their pre-war wage. Such is the reality behind the smooth talk of the Cohen Report and ministerial and press pronouncements about balancing wage increases with increases in production.

Rail Wage Rejection

Similarly the Rail Tribunal decision not only ruled out any advance to meet the increase in the cost of living, that is, demanded a cut in real wages. It also admitted that the level of wages on the railways is below the level in comparable industries or other nationalised industries, but rejected the demand that any attempt should be undertaken to make good this difference. It was noteworthy that this rejection was not unanimous, but was a majority decision of Sir John Forster and the Transport Commission's representative, while the trade union representative on the tribunal presented a minority report in favour of an immediate increase to meet the current increase in the cost of living, and steps to raise the depressed level of rail wages to a level comparable with other industries. This division is indicative of the developing clash between the Government and the trade unions.

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'No Money'

The negative awards to reject the admittedly just demands of the busmen and the railwaymen have been defended on two grounds. First, on the grounds that the principle must be established in these initial test cases to reject demands for wage increases to meet increases in the cost of living—in other words, to establish the principle that real wages must be cut. The Transport workers, admittedly on a depressed level relative to other industries, are to be made the guinea pigs in order to establish the principle that the real wages of all workers must come down. Second, it is declared that in the specific conditions of the transport industry there is 'no money' to pay increases. The report referred to the accumulated deficit of £70 million on the railways by the end of 1955, and £120 million by the end of 1956, and emphasised that out of the statutory limit of £250 million of Government advances for modernisation to cover deficits up to 1962, £110 million would already be drawn for 1956 and 1957, leaving only £140 million for the remaining five years.

Topsy Turvy Economics of Production

But the report did not point out that even for the most unfavourable last year of returns, for 1956, the total operations of the Transport Commission showed a net operational surplus (despite the removal of the most profitable sections by road haulage denationalisation), which was turned into a deficit mainly by the payment of £36 million to the former owners and £13 million other loan interest and redemption charges, or a total of £49 million to the non-producers. Here the question of 'no money' is never allowed to arise. The plea of 'no money' did not prevent the award last December of an increase of £30 a week to the Chairman of the Transport Commission, Sir Brian Robertson (from £8,500 to £10,000 a year), or increases ranging from £30 a week to £60 a week for other members, thus strengthening and invigorating them for the task of refusing increases to a railwayman on £7 7s. a week. *The Times* eloquent editorial plea invoking the railways' 'inability to pay' as the inexorable reality preventing concession of the railwaymen's admittedly reasonable demands is never invoked when it comes to paying £36 million a year to the former owners, who never do a hand's turn on the railways. Yet if all the former owners were to disappear, the railways would not only run as well as before; they would run better, through the removal of the burden and release of resources for productive purposes. Without the

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railwaymen the railways could not run for a minute. Yet the first charge is made to pay the unproductive former owners, at the expense of the living needs of the productive workers, the railwaymen, who do the work. Such are the topsy turvy economics of capitalism—presented, with brazen effrontery, as a formula for 'increasing production'.

Fallacies Exposed

Thus the concrete conditions of the opening offensive against the busmen and the railwaymen have exposed the hollowness of the official propaganda of the Cohen Report and the Government. This propaganda has sought to present a picture of wages and mass consumption outstripping production as the cause of inflation. On this basis it has sought to justify the necessity of putting a curb on wage increases in order to check inflation. The boot is on the other foot. The falsity of this propaganda has been factually demonstrated in the analysis of the Cohen Report in last month's issue of this journal ('Three Wiseacres Answered' by John Marshall). This analysis showed that in the relative proportions of demands on production, between 1948 and 1956 the proportion of consumers' expenditure has fallen from 61 per cent. to 54 per cent. The increase has been in the proportions of government expenditure, new capital investment, exports and export of capital. In other words, the economic overstrain of Britain, reflected in the recurrent crises since the war, has been caused, not by the workers or the mass consumption of the people, but by the policies and actions of the Government and the big monopolists.

Blaming the Victim

The Government and the big monopolists have sought to pursue, as the ex-Chancellor, Mr. Thorneycroft partly recognised in his famous 'slithering to ruin' speech of January 23 (he did not even mention wages as one of the factors), simultaneous ambitious and mutually incompatible programmes. They have sought to maintain an economically weakened Britain as an imperialist great power and an international financial centre, inflate armaments, conduct the cold war and colonial wars, and compete in capital exports in order to keep a grip on the empire and overseas spheres of influence. This has not only robbed the workers of the fruits of their increased production, but has brought Britain into increasing economic difficulties. When, in the face of these economic difficulties, the Government and the big monopolists now denounce the

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workers as the cause of the trouble, and demand that their standards must come down, it is a case of the Guilty Man Blaming his Victim.

Classic Offensive

In this situation the present offensive of the Government and the employers takes on the same classic type as the Baldwin offensive of the inter-war years. Once again the slogan becomes in fact 'All Wages Must Come Down'. For the demand that wage increases must not be conceded even to meet increases in the cost of living is equivalent to the demand that the level of real wages must be reduced. Having by their own policies created the special economic difficulties revealed in the present British situation (now accentuated by developing in the midst of the gathering economic crisis of the capitalist world), they turn to the classic 'solution' by attacking the standards of the people. This attack on standards is in fact conducted simultaneously on every front, as shown in the operations of the Rent Act, the cutting of subsidies, the paring down of the social services, or the effects of the block grant on education. But it is in the sphere of industry, of wages, that the decisive clash opens with the organised strength of the working class, with the trade unions. By the methods of high interest rates and restriction of credit, they have not only enormously increased the returns to the moneylenders and the owners of capital (the addition of over a hundred million pounds to National Debt interest and charges is only one portion of the total increase of unearned cash gains to the owners of money). They have simultaneously restricted employment, and by the extension of unemployment have created more unfavourable economic conditions for working class bargaining power. They have thus judged the moment at last propitious for reversing the process of concessions of the post-war years and for facing a showdown with the trade unions. The battle opens.

3. *Preparedness and the Labour Movement*

What of the unions? Despite the difficulties of the economic situation, and even because of them, through the sharpening of the battle for living needs, the positive assets on the side of the unions are high. Trade union membership and organisation is far stronger than in the inter-war years. The militant spirit of the main body of trade unionists to resist the attack on their standards and press

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forward their wage demands is marked. The busmen have rejected the Industrial Court award and given notice of strike action by May 5, failing satisfaction of their demands. The three rail unions have come together to concert their next steps in face of the Tribunal's rejection of any concession. The Easter Conferences of the unions have in general shown a determination to reject the Government's calls for 'wage restraint' and to press forward their demands. The Trades Union Congress has repudiated and condemned the policy of the Cohen Report.

Strengthening United Action

Can we then say that all is ready and in good trim for the battle to ensure the defeat of the offensive? It would be idle to overlook weaknesses in the front. The battle is still left on a sectional level for each section to face its own problems alone. Although the railwaymen, the other transport workers and the miners are simultaneously involved at different stages, there is no sign yet of the conception of the Triple Alliance which proved so powerful a factor a couple of generations ago in helping to mobilise united resistance. The Trades Union Congress attempts no direct part of leadership and co-ordination in the common struggle. Nor are voices lacking on the right wing of the trade union leadership which have given half-hearted support to the conceptions of the Government's offensive. The Conference of the Union of Shop, Distributive and Allied Workers, with the speeches of Padley and Birch (a far descent from the earlier left days of Jagger and Wilkinson) proved an exception to the general progressive trend of the Easter Conferences. The USDAW Conference adopted a resolution which in essence conceded the Government's case for wage restraint, in that it made wage increases dependent on increased production as the only alternative to avoid 'the futility of the inflationary treadmill'. On this basis the battle is surrendered before it is fought.

The Labour Party and the Unions

What of the Labour Party? The Labour Party in parliament pursues the traditional policy of isolation from the trade union struggle. The transport workers, the railwaymen and the miners, the key basic sections of the Labour Party, are faced with the prospect of battle for their conditions. Yet their political representatives, maintained by their support and sent to parliament to voice their struggle, regard it as improper to appear to be involved or to play any direct part in championing and furthering their battle.

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On the contrary, they are more concerned to repudiate with indignation the Tory 'smear' that they support industrial action. Speaking at Brighton on April 12, Mr. Robens, the Labour Party's 'shadow' Minister of Labour, declared:

> It is grossly untrue to suggest for one moment that the Labour movement associates itself with the expressions that have been made from time to time that it is in favour of strike action to settle industrial disputes.

This declaration was made within ten days of the busmen's official decision for strike action by May 5—a not negligible 'expression in favour of strike action'. Of course it could be urged in extenuation that this declaration, however inappropriate at the moment, could be interpreted as no more than the expression of the truism that no trade unionist desires a strike if the demands of the workers can be obtained, or the attack of the employers defeated, without it. Mr. Robens could claim that he went on to point out that circumstances could make it 'inevitable' for 'industrial war to break out'. But that Mr. Robens had something more in mind than the utterance of abstract truisms has been made clear by his other declarations during this period and by the general line of the dominant leadership in the Labour Party in relation to the developing industrial conflict and the economic policy of the Government.

A Defeatist Policy

For the role of the Labour Party leadership in relation to the developing industrial struggles of the workers has not been confined to one of passive neutrality. Active pressure on the unions has in fact been exerted in favour of a given policy. But the given policy has been far closer to that of the Government than to that of the trade unions. In the debates on economic policy the Labour Front Bench has vigorously and vehemently denounced the Government's responsibility and the Government's measures. But when it has come to the question of an alternative policy, their tongues have faltered and their utterances become fogged. Nor is this surprising. Having united with the Government in accepting and supporting all the burdens of the cold war, the imperialist commitments, rearmament and nuclear strategy, they were in no position to attack the principal immediate causes of Britain's economic difficulties. Instead, they accepted the essentials of the official analysis of the wage-spiral, of wage increases leading to inflation, and of the consequent necessity for wage restraint. The 'alternative' which they were most concerned to press was that a Labour Government would

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be more successful than a Tory Government in persuading the trade unions to accept wage restraint.

Negative Pressure on the Unions

In pursuance of this strategy the Labour Party Executive, during the earlier part of this year, has been engaged in negotiations with the T.U.C. General Council to persuade the latter to accept a statement of policy, in relation to a future Labour Government, which would imply the acceptance of wage restraint. The negotiations are so far reported to have been unsuccessful. The trade union leaders have had previous experience of the attempted imposition of wage restraint under Sir Stafford Cripps. They know what happened. They know that the challenge to this policy, led by the Communists and all militant trade unionists, won such increasing support as to become eventually the majority policy of the Congress and lead to the defeat of the General Council on this issue. They are not anxious to repeat this experience. No one would accuse the General Council leadership of being revolutionary. But the proposed Labour Party policy on the wage battle has so far proved too reactionary to be acceptable to the T.U.C. representatives.

Bipartisanship

Much has been said of the current bipartisanship in the sphere of foreign and defence policy—the acceptance and support of NATO, the cold war, rearmament and nuclear strategy. Even the partial step forward of the campaign now initiated for the suspension of tests, a summit conference and an international ban on nuclear weapons has not yet broken this essential bipartisanship. Indeed, the Gaitskell-Strachey-Brown school seek to combine this campaign with the open advocacy of nuclear strategy, 'tactical' nuclear war and the principle of launching nuclear war first. But less has been said of the bipartisanship in the home industrial sphere. In the parliamentary debate on economic policy on February 6 this year Mr. Robens launched into a powerful onslaught against strikes as 'a tremendous production loss for the nation' leading to 'loss of confidence in Britain by foreign investors'. These remarks won the delighted applause of the Tories. The Tory Minister of Labour, Mr. Macleod, described this section of his speech as 'the best contribution to industrial relations he had heard in the House'.

The *Daily Telegraph* (February 7, 1958) was ecstatic in its praise:

> For the first twenty minutes of his speech Mr. Robens astonished both friend and foe. He seemed to be intent on destroying the case for any

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form of strike and for the nationalisation of steel. This was the section of his remarks to which Mr. Macleod later referred as 'the best contribution to industrial relations I have ever heard in the House'. Indeed, it was sincere and well argued.

Praise indeed from the organ of High Toryism.

Mr. Robens' Philosophy

Mr. Robens further elaborated his views on strikes in a speech to the Industrial Co-Partnership Association on February 1. The *Daily Herald* reported him as saying:

> Strikes are out of date. They are a blunt instrument which could act as a boomerang.
>
> Originally, when private ownership of industry was widespread [*sic*], a strike was intended to damage the profitability of a company and the private pocket of the owner. But times have changed. We have moved into a managerial society in which shareholders are quite remote from actual management. Therefore the strike today does not affect the individuals who are managing in the way which it may have affected those individuals 50 years ago.
>
> But it did hold up orders and caused people to be chary of investing in an industry with a black record of stoppages. The result is that the strike has a long-term boomerang effect of holding up investment in an industry, and so not enabling it to become more modern and reducing its profitability.

It will be seen that the criterion of Mr. Robens is 'profitability' and the standpoint of investors.

Capitalism and Socialism

When Mr. Robens points out that strikes injure production, he is correct. But when he declares that strikes represent 'a production loss for the nation', he forgets that in capitalist society there are two nations. In a society where there is no division of classes; where there is no extraction of rent, interest and profits for a class of owners of the means of production; where production is for use and not for profit; where the means of production are owned by the working people and the fruits of their labour belong to them: that is, in a socialist society, the maximum development of production is the common interest of all, and any interference with production is a direct injury to the workers. But in a capitalist society the battle over the division of the product between the owners of the means of production and the producers can only be settled by the organised strength of either side. The final test of that organised strength is the strike. Hence in a capitalist society the strike weapon is the indispensable weapon of the workers. It is only in a socialist society that strikes are contrary to the interests of the

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workers. The sophistry of Mr. Robens consists in transplanting the conditions of a socialist society into the realities of capitalism—for the benefit of the capitalists.

A Curious Anomaly

But it is just here that arises the most peculiar feature in the philosophy of Mr. Robens and the right wing theorists of the Labour Party. If a strike occurs in a socialist country, in East Berlin or Budapest, they go into ecstasies of joy. They pass resounding resolutions of congratulations and solidarity. It is only when a strike occurs in capitalist Britain that they wring their hands, cry 'Woe! Woe!', deplore the loss to production and the menace to the interests of investors and profitability, and preach that the strike weapon is 'out of date'. Thus the peculiar philosophy of Mr. Robens, Mr. Gaitskell. Mr. Sam Watson and all the right wing leadership of the Labour Party can be briefly summarised. 'Strikes against Socialism are good. Strikes against Capitalism are bad.'

Economic Survey and the Budget

The developing industrial conflict cannot be separated from the wider perspective of the present economic situation of capitalism. The New Chancellor of the Exchequer in his Budget speech had to admit the gloomy uncertainty of the prospect:

> The level of industrial production has tended to decline slightly in the last few months and unemployment has been rising. These trends may well go rather further during the rest of the year. . . . This is indeed a difficult moment at which to read confidently the barometer of world trade and economic activity. It is clear that the economic climate of the free world* is changing.
>
> (Mr. Heathcoat Amory, House of Commons, April 15, 1958.)

Similarly the *Economic Survey 1958* offered a gloomy picture and prospect of restricted production.

> . . . . circumstances which give grounds for anxiety. . . . World industrial production is likely to be lower in the first half of 1958 than in the first half of 1957. . . . It seems probable that the decrease in the pressure of demand in relation to productive capacity which took place in 1957, will continue into 1958 (pp. 30/31).

The reference to 'World' industrial production is of course a reference only to the industrial production of the capitalist two-thirds of the world (less in practice, in view of the effective limitation of the main body of industrial production to the privileged

*Thieves' cant for capitalist world.

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centres at the expense of the majority under-developed areas—an essential feature of imperialism in contrast to the socialist world).

Contrast of Capitalism and Socialism

This contrast of the present situation and development of the capitalist and socialist worlds has now to be admitted also in the official reference books and surveys published by the capitalist world or the United Nations. Thus the latest *O.E.E.C. Economic Survey* for 1957, which could certainly not be accused of any desire to paint the picture to the advantage of socialism, describes the 'decline in the rate of expansion' in Western Europe during 1957 as below the level of 1955, and the second year of a lower rate than 1955, anticipates a further decline in 1958, and then proceeds to refer to the 'favourable economic development' of Eastern Europe.

Which Way the World?

Similarly the *United Nations Statistical Yearbook* latest edition now published records that the industrial production of the capitalist world in 1956 was 40 per cent. greater than in 1950, and 127 per cent. greater than in 1938. On the other hand, in the Soviet Union and Poland 1956 production was twice as great as in 1950 and five times as great as pre-war; in Czechoslovakia 87 per cent. above 1950 and 2½ times pre-war; in Rumania double 1950 and more than three times pre-war. Even in Hungary, where there was a 10 per cent. drop in production in 1956 (since more than made good), the 1956 level was still nearly 80 per cent. above 1950 and nearly three times pre-war. It should be borne in mind that the comparison with 1938 covers for Eastern Europe the period of uttermost Nazi destruction, looting and devastation, while the United States during those same years suffered no war injury, but only enrichment and unparalleled capital accumulation. The period 1950-56 covers the years of ruthless cold war economic blockade, maintained after the Nazi war destruction in the vain hope to reinforce its effects. Under these conditions the overwhelming and accelerating contrast in constructive achievement between capitalism and socialism during these years is an inescapable pointer to the future of the world.

Testing Time

In a letter to *The Times* on January 25 of this year Sir Robert Boothby expressed the opinion that the economic system of capital-

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ism ('free world', *i.e.*, free exploitation) was now on trial in comparison with communism:

> The economic system of the free world is, in a sense that hitherto it never has been, on trial against the communist system. . . . If we now have a major slump it will mean either that we don't know how to work it, or that there are within it inherent and potentially fatal instabilities.

Similarly the Government Minister Mr. Maudling, speaking as Chairman of the O.E.E.C. Committee for a European Free Trade Zone, said in Austria on February 7:

> The task of the West was to show that a free economic system could raise the living standards of peoples as quickly as a communist system could.

'As quickly as.' In place of their former contemptuous assumptions of superiority the Western statesmen now set it as the height of their ambition to endeavour to equal the rate of advance of living standards of communist countries. But their actions lead to the opposite outcome.

Towards the Future

On their electoral platforms they may have offered empty promises to double the standard of living in twenty-five years—with the comfortable assurance that in twenty-five years none of them would be Ministers to be brought to the test. But their *present* practical action, as shown in the bus and rail awards, is to *reduce* real wages and living standards. That is why the fight of the busmen and railwaymen and all sections in defence of their living standards is necessarily bound up with the wider fight against the policies of the Tory Government, for a change of Government, for a new programme for Britain. In the present battle we see also the battle of the future. To end the economic system which in the midst of unparalleled productive power reduces millions to want and unemployment, and finds it necessary to conduct recurrent offensives against living standards. To replace the false 'freedom' of exploitation by the real freedom which can only be built on the foundation of the abolition of the wages system and the victory of socialism.

April 16, 1958. R.P.D.

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THE LIBERAL GHOST

R. Page Arnot

TALKING to one of these engagingly young grandmothers so frequently found now-a-days, I was astonished to hear her put the question: Who are the Wee Frees?

I heard answers, 'like noises in a swound', being given: that to be a Wee Free forty years ago was to be a legitimate and true Liberal as against the bastard Liberalism of those who trafficked with the Tories; that the Wee Frees claimed to keep the doctrine and practice of Liberalism pure and uncontaminated and so would not be merged in any general anti-Labour grouping, believing that *their* anti-socialism was more potent on its own; that 'Wee Free' was the nickname put upon the followers of ex-Prime Minister Asquith and of Sir Edward Grey, for ten years Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs because they were small in number and free of the cares of office; that for a Wee Free there was no finer line in Shakespeare than that describing David Lloyd George as

Most like a Liberal Villain.

All the while these answers were being given, I was thinking to myself: what a crash it was, when that huge Liberal Party fell to pieces with the 1914-18 war; and how even the name of its shattered fragment has been sunk in the mire of oblivion ('So ran the far-famed Roman way, So ended in a mire', wrote Robert Burns); and would there now have to be footnotes to *Back to Methuselah* where in the third part Bernard Shaw tore to shreds the pretensions of the Liberal leaders? Only forty years ago!—Old mole of history, 'can'st work in the earth so fast?'

Amidst these musings (natural to anyone who remembers monarchical Europe and who has seen all that swept into the dust-bin—*and* the huge Liberal Party *and* the landlords and capitalists over the greater part of both Europe and Asia) there came a mention of a 'resurrection' of the Liberal Party. Impossible, said I. The poet Swinburne thanked the gods 'that dead men rise up never'; the same is true of dead parties.

Yet, unlike mortals, political parties have their ghosts: and these ghosts can haunt the minds of men. This happens most when minds are perplexed, as now, by threatening dangers; and when there is some disgust with both big political parties, in the absence of a fighting Labour policy. In such times the Liberal ghost stalks

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the streets of towns and other parliamentary constituencies that find themselves in the throes of a by-election. These times were dramatised recently; in Rochdale where on February 12 the Conservative vote fell from over half the poll in 1955 to less than one-fifth, while a Liberal climbed up into second place; and then in Torrington where on March 27 the Liberal came first. Torrington was a sort of 'Liberal Benefit' where Lady Violet Bonham-Carter, whom I remember as Violet Asquith, staged a comeback in the person of her son, Mark. For all these years Lady Violet, with an Edwardian eloquence that far outdoes Churchill, has expressed with flawless skill a series of out-worn ideas; and the fates could hardly grudge her this tardy little triumph. But let neither her, nor her Wee Free followers mistake a late flowering winter green for the daffodils of Spring.

The Liberal, or the Whig Liberal Party belongs to the Nineteenth Century, at most to the hundred years that followed the battle of Waterloo. In that period of advancing capitalism when this country was not only the great mart of commerce but 'the workshop of the world' (*i.e.*, was exploiting the whole world) the conception of a party claiming to bridge the gulf between the classes seemed possible, even natural. Hence the workers, after the defeat of their Chartist struggles, entered into their long winter sleep, becoming voting cattle for the Liberal Party.

But by the 'eighties this class-straddle conception was wearing thin, with the hiving-off of Liberal-Unionists to the Right and the revival of socialism on the Left. By the first years of this century it was become a patch-work quilt of Whigs and Radicals and Lib-Labs and Irish Nationalists and what not, bound to disintegrate at the first shock. That shock came with the 1914-18 war. It did disintegrate. The Liberal Party had run its course.

Today, with a party of property on the one hand and on the other hand a party based on the working class (but failing in its leadership to represent it), the seamless garment of Liberalism can no longer be woven. The ghost may flutter the dove-cots in by-elections: but it has no general election prospects. Where now are all the cohorts? At one time the bankers of the city were Liberal, the new coal-owners were Liberal, the vast shipping interests were Liberal. Almost all Britain was Liberal, except the big landlords, the bishops and the brewers. But now that world is all away. Even the intermediate sections today must either be allies of Labour or the tail of Capital.

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But despite all these hard facts there are ghostly fathers seeking to give consolation and comfort to any who will raise a shout for freedom, as Liberal factory owners shouted it a century and more ago. A book has been written by over a dozen writers*: of those whose university qualifications are given a majority are dons in Oxford, traditionally 'the home of lost causes'. And there are party publications, such as the *Liberal News*. What do they contain, apart from a series of arguments designed to show that they are doughtier warriors against Socialism than the Tories themselves? Little but platitudes, eternal verities and fine sentiments. As was said of Ancient Pistol, they have 'uttered brave words'.

But when it comes down to brass tacks, what is their standpoint? They must be on one side or other on the actual problems, as apart from the abstractions. And in each case of importance, they come down on the side of property. Take one outstanding example—the Rent Act passed last year. The *Liberal News* itself must admit that 'the Liberal Party supported the Bill on Second Reading'. But Mark Bonham-Carter, with all his hereditary qualifications (son of Violet and grandson of Featherstone Asquith) goes much further than that: he frigidly denies the suggestion that Liberals oppose the Rent Act, claiming on the contrary some pride of parentage in it ('We suggested eight years ago that such an Act was necessary') and adding:

> The only alteration to it which we have suggested is that tenants should not be evicted in October, 1958, if alternative accommodation is not available.
>
> (*Economist*, April 5, 1958.)

The very small value of this tiny amendment was swallowed up a few days later when Brooke himself, the Tory Minister in charge of rent raising, brought in his amending bill. On the Rent Act, therefore, it is clear that these present-day Liberals are more Tory than the Tories: and a vote for a Liberal is a vote for higher rents.

If in this most urgent domestic issue of an agitation against a bad law the Liberal Party standpoint, under examination, turns out to be as bad as if not worse than that of the main party of Property, what then can be said on the rest of their programme? Is it better? Is it worse? Or is it just all fine words that butter no parsnips? Well, it must be confessed that the unlikelihood of the Liberal Party ever coming into office again in this country and of being thereby forced to eat its own words has had the wonderful stimu-

**The Unservile State*, ed. G. Watson (Allen & Unwin, pp. 324, 21s.).

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lating effect that rain has upon mushrooms. The Labour Party may have its shadow cabinet: no shadow of approaching responsibility casts its restraining influence on the word-spinners of Liberalism. If, however, probing at their programmes as voiced by party leaders and headquarters' publications, we sift out some grain from the chaff, what does it amount to? Let us take a handful of items, five digits worth.

Take their programme for the future of industry, on which there has been such discussion in the Labour Party and Trades Union Congress—and in mid-April at the Scottish Trades Union Congress. On these broad future plans, the new Liberal M.P. has been outspoken enough: and with his mother, Vice-President of the Liberals, made it plain that Liberals were opposed to any Labour attempt 'to re-nationalise steel or transport'. Thus the Liberal Party supports the continuance of capitalist monopoly concerns in steel and road transport against the interests of the people. The *Liberal News* ('the organ of the only Progressive Non-Socialist Party') goes further in its negation and says bluntly 'We do not want further nationalisation', and then puts it in positive form: 'The Liberal Party believes in Private Enterprise.' Nevertheless these devotees of private property (or 'private enterprise' as their cant runs) are not quite so doctrinaire as to deprive themselves of possible votes by handing back fuel and power and railways wholesale to private owners. They want to do it in detail. Accordingly they say:

> We do not propose wide-spread denationalisation but we think that individual units within the industries might be denationalised.

This modest proposal is usually known as 'the thin end of the wedge'.

With these plans for the private ownership of industry, what does the Liberal Party propose for what is called 'industrial relations' or, vulgarly 'how much the boss is going to pay?' Here the attempted distinction between Tory policy and Liberal policy wears very thin: and quite certainly on this question of wages, there is no distinction between a Liberal and a Conservative employer. The Liberal Party, setting out with its brave words ('a good standard for all employed people') rattles down into the same outlook as the three wiseacres of the Cohen Council: while in the section of the *Liberal News* giving positive proposals, we read that their 'Plan' is for 'wages above the basic minimum to be linked to productivity and profitability'. So here we have the 'basic minimum'

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(which can be anything down to the lowest sum that will keep a man or woman alive to be exploited) and beyond that no increase in wages, nothing at all unless there is higher productivity. And how, asked Frank Cousins with well concealed scorn for his B.B.C. audience of the 'Fifty-one Follies' on April 9, how can you measure the increased productivity of a London bus-driver? 'And profitability', the *Liberal News* was careful to add. Its care was needless. For if there is one thing certain it is that higher productivity regularly brings higher profits.

But it is when it comes to trade unions that the venom of these latter-day Liberals spurts out. Take Lord Rea, the Liberal leader in the House of Lords. His views are authoritative enough to be given pride of place in the *Daily Telegraph*. There he made it clear that he prefers the provisions of the anti-Trade Union Act ('the blacklegs' charter') brought in by the Tories in 1927 to the provisions of the Trade Unions Act of 1913 brought in by his own party—when it had a body and not a ghostly presence.* He criticises every trade union

> whose rulers insist on 'contracting out' instead of the freedom of 'contracting in' and whose political levy takes money from Conservative and Liberal trade unionists to support Labour.
>
> (*Daily Telegraph*, March 18, 1958.)

For all this and more Lord Rea demands a Royal Commission on Trade Unions, the familiar weapon of the master-class in days gone by. The Tory Party in general resist social change: but it is only its lunatic fringe who howl like lost dogs for the vanished days of the mid-nineteenth century. The Liberal Party today, it seems, has nothing but fringe left to it: hence this baying at the moon from the Upper Chamber.

When we leave these sub-lunary affairs of daily life and ascend into the regions of Commonwealth politics, it might have been expected that the Liberal Spirit would spread its pinions, put a great distance between itself and the Tories, and from a lofty height pronounce its verdict on the would-be slave state of South Africa, the reactionary standpoint of Australia's cabinet and so forth, and its praise for Jawaharal Nehru. On the contrary. On questions of the Dominions and the Commonwealth there is not a word said against 'pig-iron' Bob Menzies, who on Suez was the inferior villain of the piece; nothing against the Yankeefaction of Pakistan; nothing about the near-atrocities of the South African government

*This bears out the old legend that ghosts are more malignant than living beings.

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headed by Mr. Strydom and Dr. Verwoerd. But on the policies of Prime Minister Nehru, who is the object of particular hatred by the diehards of the British millionaire press, these British Liberals in their programmatic statement in *Liberal News* find it possible to say

> The Liberal Party regrets Mr. Nehru's action in Kashmir. His tortuous course over Hungary, Israel and Kashmir damaged the chance of world peace and order.

Ah, but these are Sahibs, Liberal Sahibs who were always very good at giving lectures to the subject peoples in their dependencies.

Is there then nothing good about the Liberal Ghost? Is Liberalism now only a whited sepulchre, full of dead men's bones? No, the claim can be made that it stands for Proportional Representation as a more democratic form than the feudal-descended single member constituency method of today. Proportional Representation, the principle on which several trade unions operate elections, was in process of adoption in the Labour movement some forty years ago, when it was abruptly thrust away by Ramsay Macdonald, who had the same view of it as Asquith and other leaders of the Liberal Party then. For them to adopt P.R. now is a death-bed repentance—that cannot help the corpse, however much it may elevate the spirit.

* * * *

So that is what all their brave words come to when they are put to the test. But exposure of Liberal pretensions, however salutory, is not enough to exorcise the recurring ghost. Only a fighting policy on the part of the Labour Party can do that.

NOTE ON INDONESIA

In February *Labour Monthly* we published *Indonesia: The Truth* written by Jack Woddis several weeks before the fighting broke out. In this was the text of alleged 'top secret' telegrams, copies of which were said to have disappeared from the United States Embassy last year during anti-American demonstrations in Formosa. An Indonesian Government Special Investigation Commission was set up to examine the telegrams and their sources. It has now reported that the telegrams have been verified. Moreover, it was announced that the former U.S. Ambassador in Indonesia who sent them, Mr. John Allison, had not only dealt with smuggling arms to Indonesia but also with sending to Chiang Kai Shek a number of Indonesians who will shortly be put on trial.—Ed., *L.M.*

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CRISIS ON THE RAILS

George James*

RAILWAYMEN are determined to raise their standard of living at least to compare with other trades. They are making preparations through the district councils to achieve this, knowing full well that if the Tory Government's challenge has to be met, now is the time; no-one knows what the actual position will be in twelve months time. They must reckon both with the Government's restriction policy and with possible development of the American slump. There is no doubt that the present is the most favourable time. Further, with the rest of the trade unions preparing wage claims, whoever is in the struggle will receive full support.

Despite the fact that they realised the 'dice is loaded against us before we appear', the three Rail unions (The National Union of Railwaymen, the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen and the Transport Salaried Staffs Association) decided to refer their claim for a salary and wage increase to arbitration.

After a week of argument the tribunal issued its report, in two parts. The Majority Report was signed by the Chairman (Sir John Forster) and the representative of the British Transport Commission (Mr. A. J. Espley); and the Minority Report was signed by Mr. Edwin Hall of the National Union of Mineworkers, the representative of the unions' side.

The Majority Report turned down completely the unions' application for the first time in the history of the Railway Staff National Tribunal. And this, despite the fact that the tribunal unanimously accepted that:

> The evidence before us shows that the basic rates of staff covered by the present claims are low in comparison with these cited to us as applying in other nationalised industries, public services and certain private undertakings.

Moreover, the tribunal unanimously accepted the fact that there had been a rise in the cost of living since the last award. The Majority Report based its recommendation on the financial position of the British Transport Commission: the Government had put a ceiling of £250 million for the years 1956-62 to cover their commitments for modernisation and reorganisation, and that expenditure in the years 1956-57 had already exceeded £110 million.

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*George James, as many of our readers will know, is an executive committee member of the National Union of Railwaymen. He represents the South-West Area, including South Wales, and is President of the National Shopmen's Conference of the N.U.R.—Ed., *L.M.*

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In his Minority Report, Mr. Edwin Hall rejected the view that deficits caused by the cost of modernisation and reorganisation should be partially recouped through the worsening of the employees' standard of living. He recommended that all grades should receive increases sufficient to offset the rise in the cost of living—some 3·2%—since the award last year. Thus, he urged:

> The immediate restoration of purchasing power of wages and salaries covered by this claim, to the same level that obtained following the 20th Award, dated March 19, 1957.

Further, he recommended, after stressing that the tribunal had admitted that the basic wages are low in comparison to similar grades in other nationalised industries and public services:

> The contending parties should meet again in an endeavour to resolve this problem using the rates as submitted to the Tribunal as a basis for settlement.

What are the causes of the nationalised transport industry being in such a financial situation?

Firstly, an important factor is the cost of taking over from private enterprise. This was £1,000 million, involving a payment of no less than some £35 million in interest each year.

Secondly, the cost of modernisation was estimated originally at £12 hundred million; but today the estimate has gone up to £15 hundred million.

Thirdly, the British Transport Commission is not allowed to make charges in relation to costs for the railways must first apply to the Transport Tribunal; and if, after long delays, permission is given, the Minister of Transport can still negative the decisions. Indeed, that was just what he did in March, 1956, when he cut the 10 per cent. recommended to 5 per cent., using the latest figures available.

> Rail charges (freight) January 1956 were 172% above 1938
> Wholesale Prices (December 1955) were 249% above 1938

This becomes more glaring yet when based in real terms with 1938; for merchandise, minerals and passenger fares are below, and only coal is slightly above. This is a clear demonstration that the railways are being used to subsidise private industry.

Fourthly, transport is not a monopoly like coal, power and gas. It is in competition with private haulage firms. The basis of this competition is that road haulage firms are not common carriers like the railways, obliged by law to accept for transport whatever is sent to them. But the road haulage firms are free to choose their loads or contracts; they can reject any load which does not yield

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them the maximum profit. Whilst they can pick the profitable cream, railways *must* carry anything left over.

Fifthly there are the Government restrictions as mentioned in the Majority Report.

Finally, the interest charges are paid prior to a declaration of profit.

These factors mean that there is no money in the kitty to pay increased wages, nor is there likely to be for some years.

It was this putting of the industry into a straight jacket that caused the Court of Inquiry held in December, 1954 (the Cameron Report), to frame the dictum: 'Having willed the end the nation must will the means'. For 'nation', read 'the Government'. At the same time the Cameron Report stated 'Railwaymen should not be in a worse position than their colleagues in comparable industries'. In the years since 1954, because the 'nation' has not willed the means, the present wage structures on the railways enable Mr. Sidney Greene, General Secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen, to make some devastating comparisons with other industries, both nationalised and private concerns. To mention a few:

MINIMUM WAGE

		£ s. d.
Railways		7 7 0
Gas Industry	17s. 1d. more	8 4 1
County Council Roadmen	15s. 5d. more	8 2 5
Civil Engineering	19s. 10d. more	8 6 10
Postman at 21 years	22s. 6d. more	8 9 6
Electricity Supply	22s. 7d. more	8 9 7
Coal Industry Surface Worker, and so on upwards	25s. 0d. more	8 10 0

OTHER GRADES	*Railways* £ s. d.	*Electricity* £ s. d.	*Coal Board* £ s. d.
Light Van Driver	8 4 0	8 16 0	
Shunter	8 6 6	8 14 2	9 2 0
Road Sweeper London Borough	9 13 2	Comparison made on responsibilities	
Permanentway Lengthman after 2 years	7 19 0		
Police Constable	12 13 0	" "	
Locomotive Driver	11 2 6		

The British Transport Commission spokesman descended to first class comedy—if fourth class nonsense—with the promise of 'open air and adventure'.

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STRALSUND (German Democratic Republic)

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AS IT IS NOW — a People's Shipyard, building one fishing Lugger every three days, and still increasing production (see account on page 239)

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The Majority Report arrived at after the unions' unanswerable case had been made out, not only demonstrates that the 'dice was loaded', but that the unions are now faced with a head-on collision with the Tory Government.

The immediate reaction of all three unions was to reject completely, with disgust, the Majority Report. They also agreed to joint meetings between themselves. This is a tremendous step forward.

At the moment of writing the policy seems to be a joint approach to the British Transport Commission. Why go to the British Transport Commission if there is no money in the kitty? In my opinion there are only two possible reasons.

Firstly, to press the B.T.C. to a joint approach to the Minister of Transport to allow the kitty to have some money. The British Transport Commission are in a cleft stick: while it accepts the Majority Report it also desires the co-operation of the unions and members in carrying out the reorganisation plan to continue in the future. Furthermore, on the B.T.C. besides its chairman Sir Brian Robertson sit Sir John Benstead, former general secretary of the National Union of Railwaymen, and Mr. W. Allen, former general secretary of the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen. When appointed they were, in the opinion of the rank and file, going on as trade union representatives.

The second reason is to discover, in the event of money being available to them, what is the attitude of the B.T.C. to the last clause of the Minority Report, regarding comparison with other industries?

If the British Transport Commission says that the majority decision stands, and advises the unions to 'await better days', the unions will then approach the Minister of Transport. On the other hand, Sir Brian may feel this should be done in any case.

Whatever happens there is not the slightest doubt that to carry out the Majority Report would mean a complete withdrawal of labour.

If the Minority Report's last paragraph means an immediate 10s. 6d. rise as demanded by the busmen, together with immediate negotiations with the British Transport Commission of a concrete offer of how and when our pay will be brought up to our claim, then a peaceful settlement can be reached.

April 15, 1958.

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WHAT THE MONARCHY COSTS

'Commoner'

IT is impossible to estimate the real cost of the monarchy. There are too many imponderables such as the general discouragement of effort from the evil example set by the 'royal family' in their lives of idleness and luxury and from the resentment these create. It is impossible even to estimate its real direct cost to the nation. At the time of the coronation (when a London newspaper estimated the cost to the nation at £125,000,000) even the 'official' figure was £2,000,000. This admittedly, was almost wholly absorbed by royal and aristocratic expenses alone. The royal accounts are themselves a labyrinth through which it is impossible to find a way. In the 1953 Commons debate on the Civil List, Miss Jennie Lee, M.P., asked for a 'clear statement' on the Queen's financial position. A reasonable enough request: but no reply was given.

The direct cost of the Queen and her family to the nation has been estimated at £1,000,000 a year. 'Salaries' in 1953 were:

The Queen	£475,000
The Queen Mother	70,000
Prince Philip	40,000
The Duke of Gloucester	35,000
The Duke of Cornwall	10,000

(rising to £30,000 at 18 and £90,000 at 21)

From the Duchy of Lancaster the Queen has a 'personal' income of £90,000 a year.

The monarch pays no tax. As in so much else in the commercialised modern monarchy this is of quite recent origin. It began with George V, who claimed it because—of all reasons—of the rise in taxation resulting from World War I and his successors have claimed it since.

Even with other royal personages the Chancellor has certain discretionary powers of tax remission, and we can be sure these are not neglected. In the 1953 Commons debate it was estimated that £38,000 of Prince Philip's £40,000 a year would be treated as tax-free expenses. Currently, the Duke of Cornwall's income is taken from the revenues of the Duchy. In the past these have been so used when there was an adult Duke.

Other instructive items in the 1953 White Paper were: (1) a sum of £25,000 the wages of what are called 'the industrial workers'

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in the royal palaces—has been transferred to be borne by the Exchequer. This follows a similar transference of £50,000 in the last reign. The current Civil Estimates showed that the cost of the 'upkeep' of the royal palaces was £533,800: an increase of £24,000. This was separate from the £400,000 'improvement' schemes at Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle. (2) a total of £77,514 is now paid by the nation for royal household and other pensions. It urged that all such items should be paid by the nation.

The 1953 arrangements were drawn up with a fulness and prevision that must have aroused the sincere admiration of the City itself. One received the impression of a controlling mind of genuinely miser-like quality. Thus there was a pension of £30,000 a year on widowhood for the girl the Duke of Cornwall may marry and whom he may predecease. There were also annuities of £10,000 a year, rising on marriage to £25,000 a year, for the Queen's possible additional sons and of £6,000 a year, rising on marriage to £15,999 for possible additional daughters. There is a similar provision for Princess Margaret and Princess Anne, the White Paper observing delicately that the 'departure from custom' was justified by the 'prevailing circumstances'. Even the Queen's possible grandchildren were brought into the picture, the White Paper remarking, with a caution that can have few parallels in family finance, that 'some alternative arrangements will be necessary to make provision for grandchildren and to meet other commitments': the last curious phrase being left unexplained. Even *The Times* showed some impatience, remarking:

> It is hard to find any rational reason for the decision to settle the Civil List for a whole reign, even for the possible widowhood of the wife of one who is now a child of three and a half . . . surely more confidence might have been placed on the future generosity of the nation.

Yet even this was not all, for the White Paper went on to speak with grief and shame of unnamed royal personages for whom parliament had made 'no provision at all'.

The cost of the Queen and her family is continually rising. The present figure is £90,000 a year more than in the previous year and £190,000 more than in the previous reign. In the last reign there was also a deficit of £49,000 a year which parliament shouldered (without comment) and 'certain savings' it is now revealed, that were 'previously possible' are now absorbed by the Queen's daily expenditure. Unlike other White Papers the 1953 White Paper was insistent on the rise in the cost of living. It returned to the

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topic four times. The cost of living had increased threefold, it said, and it concluded with an open invitation to the Queen to ask for more and more. It would be 'in complete accordance with constitutional practice for Her Majesty to send a further Gracious Message to parliament asking that the original grant should be considered'.

Another item generally forgotten in estimating the royal income is the vast capital wealth of the Queen and her family. We may list the royal residences and estates, valued at £15,000,000 and daily increasing in value; the rents and produce from many of them (the Queen has been correctly described as 'one of the world's largest landowners'); the contents of the royal residences: they include 'priceless pictures and works of art'; the personal belongings of the Queen and other members of the family, including 'fabulous jewels', considerably augmented, one can assume, during the present reign; the Queen's racehorses and racing establishments. All form a background proving that the Queen does not 'represent' the nation but merely its forces of wealth and privilege.

Of the incidental royal expenditure over which parliament has no direct control, Mr. John Gordon, of the *Sunday Express*, wrote:

> Some of the Queen's advisers appear to be living in a cloud-cuckoo land of their own as far as money is concerned. They don't seem to have heard there is a painful shortage of the commodity (March 25, 1956).

This protest, like similar ones from other quarters, has had not the slightest effect; and Mr. Gordon has since listed various items of the extravagant expenditure which has marked the reign.

One of them is the building of the royal yacht, *Britannia*, about which the Palace has practised so much equivocation. It was built despite the fact that without the slightest inconvenience even to the monarchs there had not been a royal yacht for more than 30 years and despite the appearance of air travel, on which the Queen and the royal family have spared themselves, or rather the nation, nothing. Originally reported as a vessel of about 4,000 tons to cost a modest sum, the *Britannia* emerged as a vessel of 5,769 tons costing £2,500,000. To this was added immediately another £200,000, to 'adapt' it to carry the royal children to Tobruk for the 'family re-union' after the 1953-54 Commonwealth tour: an utterly unnecessary expense from any point of view and as arrant a piece of propaganda as was ever employed by Hollywood for a movie star, if indeed Hollywood ever went so far.

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But we are still far—very far—from telling the full story of the royal wealth. There is the private fortune: the amount of which—with the tax that may or may not be paid on it—has been kept a secret, but which is undoubtedly one of the greatest in history. Edward VII was said to have made £1,000,000 in a single day from a tip given him by one of his financial friends; and with the financial worlds of Britain and America ever ready to supply equally valuable information to 'the fount of honour' we can be sure that the episode was not unique. Queen Victoria's private fortune was publicly put at £5,000,000. Mr. Randolph Churchill wrote:

> In the prudent hands of prudent advisers the fortune left by Edward VII was much increased during the 25 years of George V's reign.

The same prudent hands of prudent advisers have, we can be sure, been busy ever since. The Queen is said to have large holdings in American concerns.

It is one of the many curious features of the monarchy, which is said to 'embody everything that is finest in the national life' that no such restriction is placed on the monarch as is placed on individual Ministers, who, nominally at any rate, must on taking office surrender any holdings which might profit from dealings with the department. What is denied to the head of a department is allowed to the 'head of the nation'. But the whole secrecy surrounding the royal fortune is anti-national to the last degree. It is a literal example of the fact that the modern monarchy is merely the symbol and protector of 'private enterprise', of 'Tory freedom'.

Especially then in view of the nation's continuing financial straits—its continuing poverty and servile and degrading dependence on America—must we not see something more than vanity and love of luxury in this wantonly extravagant and perverse royal expenditure? This financial 'cloud-cuckoo land'? Must we not suppose that evil counsellors have persuaded the Queen to embark on this course as a matter of policy; as a convenient means of showing she is 'every inch a Queen'; above all, as a convenient means of ensuring that the monarchy shall have (in Winston Churchill's words) that 'meaning infinitely more powerful than anyone has hitherto believed possible'—and as ensuring its continuance (in the words of the Canon of Westminster Abbey) for 'please God, at least another 1,000 years'. The method of heaping grievous burdens on a people as a means of obtaining first their 'deep respect' and then 'their deep devotion' is indeed old. It was the method of Rehoboam.

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TRUE HISTORY OF COLD WAR

D. N. Pritt, Q.C.

A SECOND volume of *History of Anglo-Soviet Relations* by W. P. and Z. K. Coates is now published.* It covers the period from January 1, 1943, to the eve of the outbreak of the Korean War in June, 1950; and is based on quotations from authoritative sources, with a modest amount of quiet and restrained comment. Covering as it does a period in which British government subservience to Washington was as humiliating, as disgraceful, and as treacherous to Britain's true interests as anything done in the Munich days, the book necessarily tends to become to some extent a history, not just of Anglo-Soviet, but rather of Anglo-U.S.A.-Soviet relations. Apart from occasional misprints and slips, such as a description of the cause of the Berlin air-lift as a 'blockade', which is what British government propaganda called it (whilst admitting when challenged that it was nothing of the sort), the book is well written, exhaustive, and extremely interesting. Its main importance is that it brings back to all of us, except the few who need no lessons because they do not forget, very vivid reminders of the events of a crucial period, and that by doing so it teaches (or recalls, as the case may be) practically every political lesson necessary to enable us to understand the battles of today.

Perhaps the first lesson is the story of the Cold War, its origins and characteristics. It did not start—as commonly suggested—with Winston Churchill's speech at Fulton, Missouri, in March, 1946; it was not a reaction to or a result of 'Soviet intransigence'; it was not just an excrescence on an otherwise healthy body of historical relations. On the contrary, it was an integral and inevitable development of capitalist reaction to the 1917 revolution; if the mere name of 'cold war' was new in the middle 'forties, nothing else was new about it.

The cold war really began, in a sense, on November 7, 1917; but as anti-Soviet hostility then took the form of hot war, it would perhaps be more correct to say that it began in 1920-21.

In more recent times, both outstanding manifestations, before Fulton as well as after, are numerous. One typical instance was the action of the Chamberlain government in the autumn and winter of 1939-40, when it sent to 'gallant little Finland' practically every effective aeroplane we had—as if we had no enemy to fight around the Maginot Line—and only its incompetence prevented it

*Published by Lawrence & Wishart. 464 pp. 37s. 6d.

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from despatching to Finland, before hostilities there ended in 1940, organised 'volunteer' forces to fight for Finland (later an active ally of Nazi Germany) against the U.S.S.R. (Nor did the Labour leaders dissociate themselves from this policy; they even expelled a member of their National Executive Committee* from the Party in March, 1940, for opposing this policy!)

When Hitler invaded the Soviet Union in June, 1941, the cold war atmosphere was so persistent that there were anxious moments while we waited to see how the British government would react. That reaction came quickly; and it did include a welcome to the U.S.S.R.—not, be it noted, as an ally (for alliance did not come for months) but as a 'co-belligerent'. But, even at that moment, when our prospects of defeating Hitler had (*before* the invasion of the U.S.S.R.) looked very small indeed, it was diluted by some unnecessary comment by Churchill. As half-comic relief we may recall the instruction by the B.B.C., at the same time, to its broadcasters that they should no longer be *grossly* abusive of the new co-belligerent. And the present Lord Brabazon (as this book records) was typical of many of his class when he blurted out the policy of getting the Germans and the Russians to kill each other in the greatest possible numbers, so that we might be stronger than they at the end of the war; but inasmuch as he was detected and public opinion correspondingly revolted, he had, nearly six months later, to give up his Cabinet post and go to the House of Lords.

In the middle period of the war, when the Red Army was doing practically all the fighting in Europe, the Cold War necessarily took a somewhat new line; for the Soviet Union had to be—in public—generously praised; silently—and indeed, not always silently, for Bevin boasted of it in the House of Commons—the policy was adopted of doing everything to ensure that the greatest possible losses, destructions, and burdens should fall on the fighting forces, the civilians, and the economy, of that country, in the hope that, when the war should come to an end, it would be too weak to count in the shaping of the post-war world which Britain and the U.S.A. were determined to retain, if they could, in the capitalist camp. This callous and bloodthirsty operation took more than one form. One was to delay as long as possible the opening of the Second Front, the only substantial contribution which the West could make on land; this was definitely promised to be opened in 1942; it was definitely promised to be opened, with a million men,

*As many of our readers will know, the member they expelled was D. N. Pritt, Q.C., the writer of this article.—Ed. *L.M.*

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in 1943; and it was finally opened in June, 1944, some *three years* after the U.S.S.R. was attacked. (This policy, which cost millions of Soviet citizens their lives, formed a striking contrast to the instant readiness displayed by Stalin in January, 1945, when the Americans let the Germans break through in South-East Belgium, to change instantly all his plans at considerable risk, and at further cost in Soviet lives, in order to advance the date of his planned offensive in Poland and thus relieve the pressure in Belgium. What reply would the cold-war merchants in Britain, with their incessant pre-occupation with post-war problems, and their determination to have a weak Soviet Union to deal with after the war, have made if the difficulties had been the other way round, and there had been an appeal to incur losses and risks to help 'the Russians' out of a difficult situation?)

Another form of the cold war, at that time, was Churchill's pet scheme, which failed in the end, to open the Second Front not in France at all, but in the 'soft under-belly of Europe', so that British troops could bolster up the fascist forces of the countries which are now the Peoples' Democracies, prevent their populations from carrying them into the Socialist camp, and establish a belt of satellites of the West as a 'cordon sanitaire' around the U.S.S.R.

And, as we have learnt by degrees, and can read in the Coates' book, Churchill and others were privately displaying in speech and writing their bitter hostility to the U.S.S.R., until the reader who can compare their private and public utterances is sickened by their hypocritical and dishonest double talk to such a degree that he will never want to believe again any statement any of them makes. (But let him guard against assuming that it is safe to believe the exact opposite of what they say! As the Irishman said: 'They are such liars that you cannot even believe the opposite of what they say!')

Thus, in public Sir Anthony Eden employed his capacity for felicitously expressing the obvious—when the obvious is popular—by constantly reminding us that the post-war future 'would be dark indeed' if the war-time allies did not continue to collaborate closely in peace-time, and reminding us, too, that the false story that 'Russia . . . was dreaming of European domination' was 'the constant theme of German propaganda'.* But behind the scenes, in

*The Americans may or may not get much of their 'ballistic missile' science from the Nazis, but there is no doubt that both they and the British government get much of their propaganda weapons from that source.

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October, 1942, Churchill was expressing himself in a Cabinet memorandum in favour of preserving the civilisation of 'Europe'—which did not include the Soviet Union, but did include the then fascist Germany, fascist Italy, fascist Spain, fascist Hungary, fascist Rumania, and fascist Bulgaria—against the 'measureless disaster' of 'Russian barbarism'. (This we learned in 1949 from Mr. Macmillan, who boasted of it at a meeting of the Council of Europe, having failed to learn the one indispensable lesson for Tories, which is not to give the game away.)

Not long before enunciating this scheme for developing a broad and deep hostility against the U.S.S.R., Churchill had written to Stalin (see *Stalin's Correspondence with Churchill, Attlee, Roosevelt and Truman*): 'We expect that Soviet Russia, Great Britain, and the U.S.A. will meet at the council table of victory as the three principal partners. . . . The fact that Russia is a Communist State . . . is not any obstacle to our making a good plan for our mutual safety'. And a few weeks later he wrote to Stalin: 'I regard our truthful personal relations as most important to the discharge of our duties to the great masses whose lives are at stake.'*

The war went on; Soviet sacrifices and victories went on; the Second Front was eventually opened; and by May, 1945, victory in Europe was achieved, the end of European fascism was accomplished—unless and until Western Capitalism should revive it—and the time was come to celebrate the victory, with Churchill and Co. still worrying about the possible revival of the strength of the ally whom they had done their best to bleed to death.

How did the Cold War manifest itself at that stage? In early May Churchill wrote his 'Message to the Red Army and to the Russian People from the British Nation':

> It is my firm belief that on friendship and understanding between the British and Russian peoples depends the future of mankind. . . . We send you from the bottom of our hearts our wishes for your happiness and well-being, and that . . . we may in loyal comradeship and sympathy walk in the sunshine of victorious peace.

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*The correspondence above-mentioned shows a steady stream of such hypocrisy; *e.g.*, 'I and my colleagues look steadily to the ever closer co-operation and understanding of the U.S.S.R., the United States, and the British Commonwealth . . . after the war'. (To Stalin, April 30, 1943.)
'I have at all times been sincere in my relations with you.' (June 27, 1943.)
'We shall have no secrets from you.' (November 25, 1944.)
'I should . . . at once remove any misconception that His Majesty's Government are prepared to consider any grouping of Powers in Western Europe or elsewhere on a basis of hostility towards, or of the alleged necessity of defence against, our Russian allies.' (To Franco, with copy to Stalin, January, 1945.)
'I am resolved . . . that the friendship and co-operation so firmly established shall not fade when victory is won.' (To Stalin, February 17, 1945.)
'No one has pleaded the cause of Russia with more fervour and conviction than I have tried to do.' (March 31, 1945.)

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According to his own account, shamelessly given in a public speech in 1954, this is what he was doing meanwhile:

> Even before the war had ended and while the Germans were surrendering by hundreds of thousands, . . . I telegraphed to Lord Montgomery directing him to be careful in collecting the German arms, to stack them so that they could easily be issued again to the German soldiers whom we should have to work with if the Soviet advance continued.

Think for a moment. The end of the most dreadful war in history; the end of the most inhuman and bloodthirsty régime in history; and Churchill's reaction was that if the Soviet army were to advance, even temporarily, beyond certain lines agreed upon by the allies for the temporary division of occupation zones in Germany he would re-arm and re-form the remnants of the most brutal army in the world's history, and march it against his allies, to add some thousands to the millions of casualties they had already borne in the common cause, in order to dispute the temporary occupation of some square miles of enemy territory! In actual fact, the only forces which advanced beyond the agreed limits were the British and Americans; but the Soviet forces did not arm any ex-enemies against them on that account, nor would they have contemplated any such treachery! But, less than a week before he thus told Montgomery to stack the arms, Churchill had written to Stalin:

> There has grown up throughout the English-speaking world a very warm and deep desire to be friends on equal and honourable terms with the mighty Russian Soviet Republic and to work with you . . . in the long and bright years for all the world which we three Powers alone can make together. I . . . have worked methodically for this unity, (and) will certainly continue to do so by every means in my power.

And only a day or two before, at San Francisco, where the United Nations Charter was being drafted, the cold war was pursuing a similar course. The well known American journalist, Mr. I. F. Stone, described it in these words:

> On the public plane a Charter is being written for a stable peace. But in private too many members of the American delegation conceive this as a conference for the organisation of an anti-Soviet bloc under our leadership. And . . . not a few of them are reckless enough to think and talk in terms of a third world war—this time against the Soviet Union.

In the light of that narrative, the Fulton speech of March, 1946, however bad it was, must be seen not as the start of the cold war but merely as the first public proclamation of it in the period after 1945 as merely one step forward in it; and the story often told that it was the start of the cold war and was brought about solely by the hostility of the Soviet Union, which had turned sincere friends into

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reluctant enemies, must be counted as one more sample of the unscrupulous mendacity of the anti-Soviet tribe.

The cold war went on; the establishment of a Labour government made no difference to it, for the policy of Churchill and of the Foreign Office was adopted and carried out by Bevin and the other right-wing leaders. In the post-war period, the cold war took the form not just of the preaching of hostility, plus an unlimited development of the anti-Communist 'smear' technique both within Britain and the U.S.A. and in practically every other country in the world, plus a vast expenditure of money in building up hostile forces and financing subversive activities in all the countries of the Socialist camp, but also of the most colossal war and armament expenditure in the history of the world, embracing the rearmament of Western Germany, carried out in defiance of treaties, of their pledged word, of every consideration of human decency and prudence, and of the memories of the 'twenties and 'thirties, when they carried out exactly the same treason to the human race, for exactly the same anti-Socialist motives, and with the obvious and inevitable result of equipping Nazi Germany for World War II.

As one reads the book, and recalls the events of its period and later, the picture grows of almost continuously sharpening cold-war conditions and increasing danger of war. Yet at the same time we have no right or need to be pessimistic, for we see, parallel to this development, the growth of the forces of peace all over the world, especially the World Peace Council and its affiliates.

At Geneva, in the summer of 1955, those forces won a great victory, which they failed to consolidate; they are on the eve of others now, which this time they must not fail to make good. The great lesson for all of us is that we *are* potentially stronger than the government which, supposedly our servant, is in fact risking the destruction of every single one of us in the futile hope of averting the development of Socialism in Western Europe; that if we work still harder than before, we shall become stronger than our government and able either to compel it to do our will and serve the true interests of all of us, or to destroy it. We shall make our government stand up to the Americans, whose post-war history includes among other things three great military defeats—in China, Korea, and Viet Nam—with possibly a fourth in Indonesia. And we shall make it hold a summit conference, abandon nuclear weapons and turn to disarmament and building a peaceful world.

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FIRST INTERNATIONALIST & COMMUNARD

S. G. Hutchins

[*On the anniversary this month of the end of the Commune of Paris in 1871 we print this commemorative article on Jules Johannard. S. G. Hutchins, whose researches for over thirty years have brought much to light about the Communards, was responsible for the materials brought together in the Paris Commune Exhibition last summer at Marx House in London.—Ed.*, L.M.]

Jules Johannard was born in 1843 at Baune and died in London in 1882—and not in 1888 as the reference books wrongly state. He is the only one of the elected members of the Commune known to be buried in London. He suffered imprisonment and pursuit as an active leader of the First International (The International Workingmen's Association).

A fluent speaker, Johannard was a member of the famous 'Club of the Cour des Miracles', a revolutionary debating society. Following a speech by him at a public meeting in Paris he was arrested and sentenced to preventive detention. After serving 42 days in the prison of Mazas he again appeared in court on a charge of being a member of a secret society (The International Workingmens' Association). A year's imprisonment, a fine and deprivation of civil rights for one year followed.

Johannard was an early member of the International but was first elected to the General Council at the Brussels Congress in 1868. The General Council on December 15, 1868, considered a request from the Alliance of Social Democracy (the organisation of Bakunin) to be admitted into the International but also to retain its own organisation. Johannard's opinion was that this proposal would only weaken the International. Marx considered that it was against the rules to admit another international society into the Association. During the year 1869 Johannard represented Italy as a corresponding secretary. On February 8, 1870, he founded a new and important branch in Paris, the Section of the Faubourg St. Denis.

When the Emperor Napoleon III organised a plebiscite in May, 1870, for a pretended democratisation, the Federated Parisian Sections of the International Workingmen's Association and the

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Federal Chamber of Labour Societies replied to this deception in a joint manifesto. They urged abstention. Jules Johannard was one of the eight signatories of the Federation.

After the defeat of Napoleon III and his army at Sedan, and the consequent declaration of a Republic, there was a general amnesty of political prisoners. But Paris was still armed and defiant—both of the Government and the invading Prussians. In each of the twenty districts of Paris, Committees of Vigilance were elected by popular acclamation. A Central Committee (four from each district) was formed. It met at the headquarters of the International: Johannard was one of the members. He became a captain of the 100th battalion of the National Guard.

On September 16, 1870, the first manifesto of the Central Committee was placarded on the walls of Paris, and Johannard's name appeared on it.

In March, 1871, came the Commune in which the Parisian members of the International were prominent and energetic. During the Commune's period of 72 days at a by-election Johannard was elected for the 2nd district of Paris. Johannard became a member of the Commission of War, and was despatched to a fighting section as a type of political commissar. He also presided at a number of meetings of the Council of the Commune.

The first major cleavage in the Commune came over the proposition to elect a Committee of Public Safety which would be given full executive powers. The Internationalists were divided on this issue, the majority of them being against on the grounds of this being a reproduction of the Revolution of 1793, with the consequent danger of a dictatorship by a small clique. The minority refused to take part either in the election or the decisions taken by this new Committee. Johannard voted for the proposition.

With the entry of the Versaillese into Paris, by a betrayal at one of the gates of the fortified city on May 21, the battle of the streets began. Here came out the fighting qualities of Jules. Together with other members of the Commune he fought gallantly on the barricade of the Boulevard Voltaire. Resisting to the last he retreated in fighting order, first to the Town Hall of the XIth district and then on to the XXth in the eastern area of Paris. He was many times reported killed, indeed as late as 1914 a book published in England described his death by shooting at the fort of Vincennes in May, 1871.

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Escaping to England, Johannard resumed his activity as a member of the International. He attended the London Congress of September, 1871. Both as a member of the General Council and as delegate from the French branch in London he was present at the Hague Congress of 1872. On the question of the removal of the Headquarters of the International from London Johannard was in favour of its transference to the continent of Europe.

In October, 1879, before the amnesty of the Communards, there was held in Marseilles a Workers' Congress. To this a number of refugees of the Commune in London issued a manifesto offering suggestions as to the organisation of a French Workers' Party. It insisted on the idea of the conquest of power by the workers, political action in many forms, electoral campaigns nationally and in the municipalities. Johannard was included in this exiles' appeal.

In the early 'eighties he lived in Manchester where he went into business. Apparently this was not successful because he resumed his occupation as a commercial traveller, this time for the sale of mineral waters. While he was thus engaged he fainted at Euston Station, and died from an embolism on November 16, 1882, at the early age of 39 years. Four days later he had a secular burial in a common grave in St. Pancras cemetery.

The soil of England received this gallant fighter for the cause of humanity just four months before that of a fellow political exile, revolutionary and leader with whom he worked, Karl Marx.

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THREE RECENT NOVELS

Arnold Kettle

TO come upon these three books* after reading a number of highly professional, well-reviewed, fairly typical contemporary novels is a most thought-provoking experience. One's first sensation is of straight-forward gratitude, not least to Messrs. Lawrence & Wishart. Here are three writers who write about things that matter, people that matter, life that is not only recognisable but important, important to millions of people, not just a relatively narrow group of like-minded readers.

Then one is struck by the *moral* contrast. It is not merely the subject-matter of these three books that is down-to-earth, real in the sense of being shared by vast numbers of people, the *values* in them are strikingly different from those of the run of middle-class novels. Problems that arise in the lives of these writers' characters are there not just to be expressed but to be solved. 'For three weeks he had been evading the problem at the same time as he tried to solve it' writes Len Doherty of his hurt and humiliated hero. For three weeks. What are three weeks beneath the skies of eternity, one can almost hear the bourgeois novelist asking, hawking at the same time his sense of spiritual superiority, poor mut to imagine that in three weeks or months or years he can solve the Human Predicament. But to Jim Harris the miner, three weeks is three weeks and he knows very well that either he will get on top of this domestic problem of his or it will get on top of him, and he isn't the sort to let things destroy him, not without a fight anyway; reality beats too close, too insistently. For Harris and for pretty well all the characters in these three novels there is not a deeper reality or an inner reality or a further reality; there is reality and that is quite enough to be getting on with.

Reading Doherty and Lambert and Smith one recalls perhaps from a different angle that old claim of the Soviet critics in the earlier days of socialist realism that socialist literature as such, just because it is socialist literature, is superior to bourgeois literature as such. It is not a fashionable point of view nowadays, even among Marxists; but there is tremendous force to it. Unless one has felt very powerfully the sense in which these three working-

**A Field of Folk*, by Herbert Smith, 15s.; *No Time for Sleeping*, by David Lambert 10s. 6d.; and *The Man Beneath*, by Len Doherty, 10s. 6d. Published by Lawrence & Wishart.

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class novels really are better than even very good middle-class novels I doubt if one is in a position to contribute at all usefully to any discussion of literary value at the present day.

R. Palme Dutt in a recent *Labour Monthly* has very properly reminded us that

> The province of the writer and the artist is to *see* and to *feel*—to see life truthfully, with all the passion of his being and the strength of his understanding, and to depict it with a vision that illuminates the vision of all of us, makes the familiar new, awakens dulled and dormant capacities of feeling, and deepens the sense and understanding of life and human relations.

How far do these three novels measure up to such criteria?

Herbert Smith's *A Field of Folk* lacks the passion of fine art. Like all the novels discussed here it is very readable and interesting. One gets to know a good deal about that West London factory and in some ways gets a real feel of it. Yet the novel lacks tang, the sharp tang of London talk, the bitter tang of overcrowded housing, the elusive rich tang of character. One of the chief characters is described as Falstaffian, but there is nothing of the incredible surprisingness of Falstaff about him (a tall order, indeed, but Mr. Smith invites the comparison himself). He is simply a large, good, honest man. Where are the rejected possibilities in him?

I think Mr. Smith was unwise to carry his story into the realms of the bosses. His well-to-do characters are quite unconvincing, both in the detail of their way of life and in the character of their talk. Capitalists are more slippery customers for the novelist to catch than these. But this would not have mattered if the working-class characters had come to life more fully themselves. Kathy Besson, for instance. We are told a good deal about her and see her doing a good many things; but somehow the essence of her never comes across. This is partly due perhaps to Mr. Smith's too naturalistic dialogue. It is true that English working-class people do not, by and large, expose themselves in their speech, which is often compounded of cagey under-statements, overworked clichés and downright evasions of emotion; the novelist's job is to get round this by subtle emphases and catches of tone which the reader probably isn't aware of at all but which add up to the difference between a photograph and a portrait.

Sometimes Herbert Smith catches a moment of reality with a real artist's touch: a queue waiting for a bus, the men's delight at

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Kathy's new hair-do, the good touch of making the unexpected man take the vital stand. But the chief weakness of his book lies, I think, in a fear of letting himself go, carrying situations to an extremity, enjoying sufficiently the individuality of his characters. I make this criticism rather than the more obvious one—that politically things work out too easily in the EMF factory—because I think it is more fundamental. It is because a sufficiently vibrant sense of life has not been generated that the political development seems a bit superficial. But in fact in detail the political aspects of *A Field of Folk* are very well done. I feel certain it will be, in the best sense of the word, a very *useful* book to industrial workers who will get a great deal not only of pleasure but of discussion out of it.

David Lambert's *No Time for Sleeping,* although it is set in Scotland in the 'thirties, deals with many of the same problems as *A Field of Folk,* especially the relations of communists and labour people in the factories. The atmosphere of the two books, however, is very different, for whereas the whole texture of *A Field of Folk* belongs to the 'fifties—one of the recurring factors in Herbert Smith's book is the lack of action in the factory for some years and the consequent inexperience of many workers—*No Time for Sleeping* has a tremendous surging sense of a historic movement, so that episodes and individuals are less important than the general feeling of political struggle, a capturing of the invincible spirit of the 'Clyde Rebels'.

David Lambert has made a great advance in comparison with his first novel, *He Must So Live,* in his handling of dialogue. This time he gets the real flavour of Glasgow talk (tactfully diluted somewhat to avoid the complete bewilderment of the southern reader). The new novel continues the story of the same group of characters but is centred mainly on Jean O'Brien. She is a more successful character (artistically, I mean) than Mr. Smith's Kathy but also somewhat idealised. Mr. Lambert's strong suit is mass struggle rather than the personal kind and though Jean's discovery that 'your love for Davie, or for Don, was no deeper than the love these men held for the movement they spent so much of their lives in' is in one sense convincing, one doesn't feel that he goes deep enough into the complexities of personal life. One knows very little, for instance, about a key character—Davie Ramsay—and even less about the sinister Bob Rose, who causes so much trouble personally and politically. Perhaps David Lambert proposes to develop these characters at greater length in his next book.

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The quality which *The Man Beneath* alone of the books under review possesses is intensity. Perhaps it is a quality which middle-class literature has led one to overrate, but I do not think so. The intensity which permeates the best of Len Doherty's novel springs not from sensationalism or morbidity but from allowing deep conflicts and clashes to develop and express themselves without fear or sentimentality.

Doherty manages what could easily be a clumsy structure to his novel very skilfully on the whole. Jim Harris lies trapped in a pit accident; in intervals of lucidity as the rescuers try to dig him out he recalls episodes of his life which build up into a life story. A more technically experienced writer would have handled the transitions of the story differently, but I do not think this is important. What emerges from the novel is a wonderfully convincing picture of a community—the mining village—and of some of the conflicting forces within it. The thing centres on Harris himself—'king' of the village, secretary of the N.U.M. branch. I think there is an element of idealisation of Harris rather deep in the book which is spot-lighted by the final near-bogus sentence and emphasised by the more obvious idealisation of the young communist, Johnny. But I would not suggest that this seriously eats into the value of the book. Its effect is rather to give the novel slightly too much uniformity of tone; it is as though Len Doherty, because he cannot quite make up his mind about Harris, is driven into repeating himself. There is a bit of a danger of the man beneath becoming a sphinx without a secret.

But this is a fine working-class novel, sensitive in a way workers can be and middle-class writers by and large are not—that is, sensitive to the actual degradations and aspirations of working-class life, plumbing reality not for something beyond it but for what is within it. *The Man Beneath* does not mark a spectacular advance on *A Miner's Sons* but there is an advance nevertheless—in ease, confidence, and in a certain way in courage. The real test of Len Doherty will be whether he is able to continue to develop his greater confidence as a writer without developing alongside it that individualist mode of thought and feeling which has been the fatal temptation of so many young worker-writers once they have begun to break through.

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By Michael Shapiro.

Lawrence & Wishart. 182 pp. 15s.

MICHAEL SHAPIRO has put us all in his debt. The book he has written could not have been written except from *within*. After all, the happenings of today in China are the most important of our life-time, transcending even sputniks. Remember, 1 in about every 4½ people is Chinese. The transformation of such an enormous bloc of human beings into educated, active, able, enlightened people of a Socialist society will inevitably have an immeasurable impact upon the rest of the world. The world of our children, in its balance and character as a whole, in its relationships, will be utterly different from the world of our fathers.

Yet what do we know of this, of what is happening, how and why? There are not a few traveller's tales now available, and some of us have been lucky enough to pay visits there ourselves. Yet all these fleeting impressions are as static, when compared to the dialectical richness of developing reality, as an album of photographs. Shapiro, living there, is able to give us a glimpse of the *process*, as it is actually occurring.

Sometimes we get scraps of news out of China, that make us wonder. Socialism wants people, needs people, yet China is now feeling its way toward a temporary encouragement of birth control. The peasant's dream of land has been a longing of many thousand years, yet he is already, and even faster than expected, taking to a collectivisation even before the machinery that made it possible and desirable in U.S.S.R can possibly be available in China Capitalists expect to be wiped out—as capitalists—by socialism, yet the Chinese capitalist is reconciling himself to the march thither. Socialism inherently includes planning, yet a vigorous free market is playing a useful role. All these strange and fascinating facts are usefully and illuminatingly explained by the author. The fantastic difficulties of moving toward Socialism in a community so numerous, so devoid of educational facilities, so lacking in productive machinery have never been so clearly depicted, or in a way so instructive and useful as an exemplar for the experience of those who will follow in China's footsteps.

Mind you, the author is an optimist rather than a critic. One almost receives the impression that the marvellous adjustment of theory and practice, the elasticity that has enabled China to turn and modify and thread its way while maintaining the essential and the goal, has reached a present where all the problems are understood and all the lines at last right. But this is an impression no doubt he does not intend to give, it springs from a confidence, based fairly on past achievement and present success, that the elasticity will persist and prove capable of coping with every unforeseen new obstacle. The more one digests his invaluable picture of how and why the present has been reached, the more one feels his confidence is justified not only in respect to the future of China, but also that of the rest of the world, including our own corner, which it will inevitably influence.

IVOR MONTAGU.

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Iuman China.
A Diary with Poems by Rewi Alley.
New Zealand Peace Council, 1957.

N a day-to-day diary covering August 23-December 30, 1956, followed by eleven poems, Rewi Alley lashes kaleidoscopic pictures of China rapidly on his pages. We go with him during the sultry days of late August and September to Kansu and Chinghai in the north-west where he re-visited the area in which he worked during his days with the young industrial co-operatives of Sandan; then later, in the golden autumn, after a friendly interlude in Peking, south to see how the old industrial co-operative in Shaokwan, Kwantung Province had fared. 'In the old days,' he said, 'Shaokwan was a sad place,' but on his return he found a large new factory, beautiful gardens and 'a feeling of great peace'. Returning north through the coastal provinces, until recently ill-served by railways, his daily notes record with warm delight the many changes he found, changes which have already become outdated. Conversations with many old friends tell the human story of the changing society. The flashing smile of the school boy on the ferry in his new school clothes, the robust brown bodies of lithe, laughing children, the expression of joy in creative work shown in the eyes of one of his old industrial co-operative apprentices, now an experienced technician—all reveal the vivid zest for life which he finds throughout all these areas which he had known before as centres of bitter struggle during the old Japanese-dominated and Kuomintang days. It is the reflective diary of one who deeply loves China and her people, having come with them through their days of misery. Although a diary is necessarily scrappy, this one is bound together by this unifying thread of affectionate appreciation, and by its prevalent theme, the development of the old 'Gung Ho' (Working Together) industrial co-operatives of the old days into the thriving organisations they are today.

E.V.P.

The Living U.S. Constitution.
Edited by Saul K. Padover.
The New American Library. 176 pp. 3s. 6d.

This pocket book includes the full text of the Constitution, its various amendments, including the first ten known as the Bill of Rights, some Supreme Court decisions on early Constitutional issues, and a listing and brief description of the delegates to the Constitutional Convention. It has little of the class background that determined the struggle around the Constitution, whose ratification only became possible when a Bill of Rights—as demanded by Thomas Jefferson—was finally promised. The only inkling of this is in the two sentences saying 'In general, the battle was drawn along class lines. Propertied and educated people as a rule favoured the Constitution; the poor and non-privileged usually opposed it'.

The central weakness of even such a limited volume is its failure to estimate the U.S. Constitution historically. Despite Padover's claim to be a liberal historian, he still characterises the Constitution today as 'still a living' document, 'meeting the needs, as it always has done, of a great growing powerful technologically advanced self-governing republic'. While the Constitution as adopted represented the cornerstone of government of a victorious people who had just won their independence, it already lacked the clarion

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call to freedom that characterised the Declaration of Independence, or the protection of democratic rights as won by the people's struggle for the Bill of Rights. It was an advanced document representing a compromise of the two main ruling class forces of the day—agrarian and mercantile—who historically were playing a progressive role.

While every aspect of American bourgeois democracy has to be defended and fully utilised today, the Constitution and Jeffersonian democracy can only be saved and have meaning today when it is blended with the fight of the present for the right to utilise such aspects of bourgeois democracy—and above all, when it finds a modern expression by being merged with the fight for a Socialist U.S.A. Not 'looking backward' but 'marching forward' is the need of the hour in America.

JOHN WILLIAMSON.

Going to Russia?
A Popular Guide for Tourists.
Kathleen Taylor
Lawrence & Wishart.
186 pp. 13s. 6d.

KATHLEEN TAYLOR has written a book which will be an informative and instructive companion to the tourist; which will assuredly kindle in the armchair reader an almost irresistible hankering to phone a tourist agency right away and—finance and time permitting—assign the next holiday to a trip to Russia and which will induce acute nostalgia in those who, like myself, lived and worked in the Soviet Union some years ago.

Rightly enough, most space is given to Moscow and Leningrad, where most tourists will spend most time, but there is also an alluring section devoted to the Crimea, Black Sea coast and southern Caucasus, lands of sea and sunshine, semi-tropical flora, vineyards—and wine.

There is enough history for background, and much practical information—the kind of help the tourist needs most, particularly when you are not going on an excursion but are strolling about on your own, without benefit of guide or interpreter. There is also a glossary of useful Russian words and phrases with phonetic spelling, although stressed syllables are not indicated. And on the inside front and back covers are maps of the Soviet Union in Europe. Perhaps future editions might well carry street plans of Moscow and Leningrad? This book is a suitcase essential when you go to Russia.

CHARLES ASHLEIGH.

This is the basis of our confidence and conviction in the inevitable triumph of communism. All people will inevitably come to this, but it is hard to say when. It is a long way and it is not necessary to advance towards communism by sowing death. Quite the contrary, communism is the most humane and the most philanthropic ideology. If the triumph of communism were to be gained by aggressive wars and the extermination of people, in that case I personally would oppose communism.

Interview of *The Times* Foreign Editor with N. S. Khrushchov, January 31, 1958.

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A REAL 'PEOPLE'S SHIPYARD'

Commander E. P. Young,
R.N., Retired.

THE shipbuilding industry of the German Democratic Republic is, of course, all publicly-owned. This is indicated by the letters VEB (Volkseigener Betrieb) preceding the names of the shipyards. Amongst these the *VEB Volkswerft Stralsund* differs from all the rest in being styled a 'People's Shipyard'; and thereby hangs a tale. (*See pages 216-17.*)

When the Red Army took Stralsund in the summer of 1945, the bridge linking the town with the offshore island of Rugen was destroyed by the German sappers. The local Germans were ordered to rebuild it forthwith, and to do this they had to rope in every skilled tradesman over a wide area. When the job was completed, these were workless and destitute. So the local Soviet commander suggested that they might provide themselves with work if they restored the small shipyard which used to make yachts and other pleasure-craft, and developed it for the production of fishing luggers. These the U.S.S.R. would be glad to accept in payment of war reparations.

The Soviet commander had the tact to 'sugar the pill' by proposing that the shipyard should forthwith become a 'People's Shipyard', the property of those who built it up and would work it. He pointed out that they would dispose of its output eventually, when reparations ceased. Thus the *Volkswerft Stralsund* came into existence: a first experiment by the Germans in practical Socialism.

When I first visited Stralsund in the summer of 1949, work was well in hand on an ambitious plan, based entirely on local resources. The yard was already turning out luggers for the U.S.S.R. at a rate of about one a week. The local Soviet commander had given recognition to this gratifying response to his initiative by handing over the former Naval Barracks on Rugen (complete with ballroom and playing fields) for the use of the shipyard workers, whose numbers had by then swelled to about 2,000.

When I went back there in the spring of 1955, the shipyard had become a VEB like the rest; but it had preserved its title of *Volkswerft*. All were obviously very proud of this. It had trebled

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its personnel to 6,000 (well paid for working a forty-eight hou week, in three shifts); together with 800 apprentices under trainin and 180 'social workers', employed in its well-equipped polyclinic canteens, library and club. It was still building mainly luggers, bu had gone into series production and was running these off at a rate of one every three days—a hundred a year! Most were goin to the U.S.S.R., but whereas formerly the proceeds of all sale abroad went into the Reparations Account, these were now accru ing to the credit of the German Democratic Republic, even whe sales were to the U.S.S.R.

Today, three years later, the constructional work is completed and *VEB Volkswerft Stralsund* has gone over to the building of a larger type of fishing vessel, the Middle Trawler. Though its workers are now on a forty-two hour week, with no reduction of their high wage rates, and overtime is strictly limited, it expects shortly to be running these off just as fast as the luggers, at a rate of one every three days, and to market them at a competitive price This, to show the others what Socialist organisation plus socialist spirit can achieve.

LABOUR MONTHLY TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AGO

12 YEARS BEFORE THE NAZIS FELL

Fascism sets itself to exterminate Marxism, that is, to exterminate the independent working-class movement and the fight for Socialism. The attempt is not a new one. A hundred years ago 'all the Powers of old Europe have entered into a holy alliance to exorcise the spectre of Communism: Pope and Czar, Metternich and Guizot, French Radicals and German police-spies.' The collapse of 1848 was heralded as the collapse of Socialism. In the decade after the Commune, on the basis of thirty thousand corpses, Thiers boasted that 'we have heard the last of Socialism.' In the following decade Bismarck set himself to stamp out Socialism in Germany with all the power of the most highly organised Prussian police and bureaucratic system, and after twelve years had to recognise that he had met his master. Down the long gallery of the years the ghosts of the past, Cavaignac and Gallifet, Thiers and Bismarck, Pobiedonostsev and Stolypin, Kornilov and Kolchak, the hangmen and butchers and gaolers of bourgeois rule may welcome with a spectral sneer the new accessions to their ranks, Hitler and Goering and Goebbels.

From *Notes of the Month* by R.P.D., May, 1933.

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(Continued from page ii of cover)

Unions by Jim Gardner (Foundry-workers' General Secretary). Then here was *Where Do We Stand Now?* by Councillor E. A. C. Roberts (engineers' assistant secretary). In February came *The Trade Unions Know Their Business* by Harry Brotherton (President of the Confederation of Shipbuilding and Engineering unions). In March Harold Poole, the coppersmiths' general secretary, discussed how *The Unions Face a Challenge;* and last month we had *The Miners: A Reappraisal* by the Yorkshire President, J. R. A. Machen. This last called forth a number of comments from union leaders and M.P.s. Not all of course agreed with it. Some felt it had gone 'too far'; others that it had not gone nearly far enough. But all seemed to find it 'of very great interest', and some congratulated us on printing it. A journalist whose experience of industrial questions is perhaps unique told me that he thinks it the most important series of articles by trade union leaders which has been published for many years. This month railway problems get timely treatment both from George James (National Union of Railwaymen's executive), and in the Notes.

One donation I must refer to this month. Recently we lost a friend of long-standing, known to all progressive movements in the Home Counties. A woman of great courage and spirit, she never allowed a serious disability to hem her in. I wrote to her 85-year-old husband, Dr. Gilbert Elliot, saying what we felt about her, and he replied: 'Many thanks for your letter about Queenie, which would have pleased her. When I got home after her death I found L.M. waiting. We used to read it to each other, and would start with your article on the cover. I know Queenie used to send donations, so here is a small one in her name.' Since writing that, our old friend Dr. Elliot himself is no longer with us. But we shall not cease to count him and Queenie amongst 'the living'. March donations totalled:

£36 10s. 3d.

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